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AUTHOR Moss, Pamela A.; Petrosky, Anthony R.
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ABSTRACT

The diagnostic testing component of the Critical Thinking Project of the Pittsburgh schools is described and a rationale for the project's particular choice of testing procedures is provided. The purpose of the project was to help students develop skills for thinking critically and communicating critical thought through reading, discussion, and essay writing within the social studies curriculum. The project defined critical thinking as a dynamic process of questioning and reasoning that reflects a trusting, yet skeptical orientation toward the world. Critical thinking skills are interdependent emphasizing both oral and written expression. Because no existing tests suited the project's conceptualization of critical thinking or met its practical needs, the project developed a testing procedure that asked students to read passages relevant to their social studies curriculum and write essays in response to questions which asked them to do such tasks as evaluate or draw inferences from what they had read. Asking students to state their ideas clearly and to justify or defend those ideas with coherent explanations and evidence provides insight into the thinking process. An analytical scoring guide which teachers can apply to their student essays quickly to obtain relevant diagnostic information was also developed. Included are two sample essays followed by excerpts from the project's teacher training materials which provide the rationale for the scores given and suggestions for providing feedback to the students who wrote the essays. Appended are a field test version of a critical thinking test and a detailed version of a diagnostic scoring guide. (RM)

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Monitoring Achievement in Pittsburgh

Critical Thinking Project
Pittsburgh Public Schools
Richard C. Wallace, Jr., Superintendent

A PROPOSAL FOR MEASURING CRITICAL THINKING

Pamela A. Moss and Anthony R. Petrosky

University of Pittsburgh

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Division of Curriculum Development
341 South Bellefield Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

ABSTRACT

The Critical Thinking Project of the Pittsburgh Public Schools aims to help students develop skills for thinking critically and communicating critical thought through reading, discussion, and essay writing within the social studies curriculum. The project, which began in September 1982, has three related components--instruction, assessment, and staff development. It involves selected teachers and supervisors from the school district in the development, adaptation, and use of the instructional techniques, the diagnostic tests, and the staff development itself. This paper describes the diagnostic testing component of the project (essay tests rated by classroom teachers using an analytic scoring guide) and provides a rationale for choosing essay tests over alternative testing formats for measuring critical thinking.

A Proposal for Measuring Critical Thinking

In September 1982, the Pittsburgh Public Schools began a three-year Critical Thinking Project to develop a curriculum to teach critical thinking skills. The project aims to help students develop skills for thinking critically and communicating critical thought through reading, discussion, and essay writing within the social studies curriculum. The project has three related components--instruction, assessment, and staff development. It involves selected teachers and supervisors from the school district in the development, adaptation, and use of the instructional techniques, the diagnostic tests, and the staff development itself.

This paper describes the diagnostic testing component of the project and provides a rationale for our particular choice of testing procedures. Although instruction is the primary emphasis of the project, we recognize that testing can interact with instruction in some very important ways. It can provide feedback to teachers regarding the success of their instruction in skills for critical thinking and to students regarding their success in mastering those skills. It can help teachers plan instruction by providing information on their students' strengths and weaknesses. Ultimately, it can promote instruction in critical thinking, as teachers are more likely to teach what will be tested.

The Rationale[1]

The term, critical thinking, and related terms such as problem-solving, rational thinking, and reflective inquiry are an integral part of our public

[1] The following five paragraphs are based upon a project working paper prepared by Catherine Cornbleth, University of Pittsburgh, and Thomas S. Popkewitz, University of Wisconsin--Madison.

language when we talk about the purposes of education. However, there is little agreement among educators about what critical thinking is. Definitions of critical thinking that have been proposed in the abundant literature on the subject almost invariably involve lists of "skills" or "aspects" or "steps" which are subsumed by the construct. (See McPeck, 1982, and Cornbleth, 1978, for reviews of the literature.) While there is some underlying commonality among many of these definitions, the diversity of cognitive processes, knowledge structures, and affective orientations that have been proposed as components of critical thinking makes it difficult to delimit the concept or to capture its essence.

In our still evolving effort to come to grips with the meaning and manifestations of critical thinking, we have tentatively concluded that to define critical thinking as a series of discrete skills or steps is misrepresentative in at least two ways. First, it suggests that critical thinking is or should be linear, which it rarely if ever is or could be. As one question is explored, for example, others may be raised or pursued while the initial question is put aside temporarily or abandoned altogether. Secondly, critical thinking is creative in ways analogous to writing poetry or sculpting. Reducing critical thinking to a series of skills is like painting by number. Such a conception of critical thinking suggests that the parts add up to make the whole. Unlike jigsaw puzzles and most automobiles, critical thinking cannot be taken apart and reassembled without damage.

We have come to understand critical thinking as a dynamic process of questioning and reasoning that reflects what might be described as a trusting, yet skeptical, orientation toward the world. It is active inquiry rather than passive acceptance of tradition and authority or "common sense." To think critically is to question public statements, beliefs, and definitions. It

involves considering what might have been and what may yet be.

That orientation to critical thinking has guided the development of the project's instructional goals and strategies and related assessment procedures. When we think of critical thinking skills, we look to skills that contribute to critical thinking, not skills which stand as separate things to be taught independently. Depending on how one prefers to think about skills, critical thinking can be seen as involving a few or dozens of skills, including, but not limited to reading and writing skills, academic or study or library research skills, and so-called higher level skills such as logical analysis, summarizing, classifying, inferring, and evaluating.

An emphasis on oral and written expression is central, we think, to instruction and measurement in critical thinking. Talking and writing strike us as generative in the same sense that thinking is generative. When students think, talk, and write, they make meaning; and when students focus on making meaning in critical ways, they end up with extended discourse which can both create and present critical thinking. The expressions of critical thought--discussions, compositions, and other types of presentations--are ways of both discovering and verbalizing questions, conclusions, and the paths by which those conclusions were reached. The substance and quality of these expressions provide evidence of more or less critical thought.

We found no existing tests that suited our particular conceptualization of critical thinking or that met our practical needs. The vast majority of tests that could be considered critical thinking tests, including the two most popular critical thinking tests (The Watson Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal and the Cornell Critical Thinking Test), measure discrete skills in a multiple-choice format (see McPeck, 1982, for a detailed critical review).

The assessment of discrete skills did not fit with our understanding of skills for critical thinking as interdependent and as components of an integrated and frequently recursive process. Further, we did not find multiple-choice and short-answer testing formats appropriate. While the results of a critical thinking process can be expressed, at times, in phrases, statistics, and other convenient shorthands that require little more than stating, listing, or marking answers, the encouragement of such expression to the exclusion of extended discourse has unfortunate pedagogical implications. Multiple-choice and short-answer items, while simpler to use than essay items, provide almost no insight into the process that generated the student's response and consequently are not particularly useful for diagnostic purposes. A "correct" answer might be the result of a lucky guess; an "incorrect" answer, completely justifiable, were the student allowed to explain the reasons or assumptions that led to that choice. Moreover, such testing formats imply that a single correct or best answer exists. This implication is antithetical to our goals in teaching critical thinking. The point is not whether students can recognize or produce an answer that the teacher or some other authority considers correct, but rather whether they can adequately explain, validate, and defend the responses they have generated. Rarely, outside the somewhat artificial world of the testing industry, do "correct" answers exist. We do our students a disservice by not encouraging them to explain and support their responses. Even critical thinking tasks that might result in something other than language, like a statistic, still require quite extended language to be intelligible and convincing to others.

We therefore decided on a testing procedure similar to that used by the Third National Assessment of Reading and Literature (NAEP, 1981), where students were asked to read prose passages or poems and then write essays to

explain their interpretations of what they had read. We chose to have students read passages relevant to their social studies curriculum and then write essays in response to questions which ask them to do such tasks as evaluate or draw inferences from what they had read. To be sure, a product of critical thought, such as an essay, does not provide an exact image of the process. However, asking students to state their ideas clearly and justify or defend those ideas with coherent explanations and evidence does provide insight into the thinking process (while, at the same time, serving as a vehicle for that process).

Unfortunately, the use of essay tests for district-wide testing on a regular basis presents some practical problems. They are time consuming to develop and to read and difficult to score reliably or consistently. There is also the danger that teachers will focus on the "surface" features such as mechanics and usage errors, which are easy to score, ignoring the features of the essay that provide evidence of critical thought. To help alleviate these problems, we developed an analytic scoring guide, to be described below, which teachers can apply to their student essays relatively quickly to obtain relevant diagnostic information.

The Test

The project goals or objectives that guide both testing and instruction are summarized below. Using social studies subject matter, students are expected to:

- read (or, in the primary grades, listen to) selected passages;
- prepare for critical thinking, discussion, and/or writing by listing, diagramming, or outlining important parts, ideas, events, personages, or settings from given reading materials;

- engage in questioning and discussing what they have read (or heard), using complete sentences, and providing explanations and evidence from their reading materials or other sources to support their statements;

- summarize and paraphrase (orally and in writing) what others have said, revising their own positions on the basis of new information or interpretations;

- write essays that reflect critical thought and that include the elements important to the coherent, persuasive communication of critical thought;

- revise and edit their essays in light of feedback from peers and teachers, according to the specific criteria outlined in the Critical Thinking Diagnostic Essay Scoring Guide.

Having put aside the notion that lists of skills can define critical thinking, we nevertheless found that an efficient way to help the test developers (a "steering" committee of approximately 25 district teachers and supervisors) generate essay questions and instructional materials was to provide them with a framework from which to work. So we developed the tentative list of what we call "skills that contribute to critical thinking"--in the sense that they can prompt open-ended questions, thinking, writing, and discussions. The list that appears below is our current "working" list, subject to additions and deletions as the need arises. It was never intended to be comprehensive (as we are convinced that is impossible) or taxonomical. It could be much longer and perhaps more detailed, but our steering committee advised us that, with a longer list, teachers using it might be overwhelmed and "lose sight of the forest for the trees." The list simply provides a framework from which teachers can build teaching and testing materials.

Skills that contribute to critical thinking include:

summary, where students compose

descriptions of selected parts of reading materials and presentations;

reconstructions of events or ideas in sequence from passages and presentations; and

brief summaries of events and ideas.

classification. where students compose

comparisons, contrasts, and classifications based on reading materials and presentations;

distinctions between ideas and supporting evidence; and

distinctions between facts and other statements.

inference. where students compose

explanations and interpretations of events, ideas, and actions;

conclusions and generalizations from events, ideas, and actions;

predictions and hypotheses; and

opinions and points of view.

evaluation. where students compose

judgments of the accuracy, consistency, and completeness of ideas and actions;

judgments about the ethics or values of ideas and actions;

judgments of the merit or worth of ideas and actions; and

criteria for all and any judgments.

A test booklet consists of (a) a brief reading passage, customarily written by members of our steering committee, which is selected based upon its relevance to the social studies curriculum, the amount and accuracy of the evidence it contains, and its inherent interest to students; (b) a set of directions preceding the reading passage to help students focus on the aspects of the passage that are relevant to the essay question; (c) the essay question itself, which specifies what is expected of the students; and (d) a lined space for writing, directly opposite the reading selection, so that students may easily refer back to the passage as they write. A sample test

booklet, developed for students in grade 11, is presented in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

We developed an analytic scoring guide that would provide specific diagnostic information, relevant to instruction, that teachers could apply relatively quickly and consistently, and that could be used to give feedback to students. We began by examining the nature of essays that provide evidence of students' critical thinking. What, in other words, we asked ourselves, might an essay look like that adequately expressed a student's views, for instance, on the evaluation of Thomas Paine's arguments in Common Sense? Were there necessary elements or aspects of communicating critical thinking that should surface?

After grappling with these questions and numerous versions of a scoring guide, we decided on five elements which now comprise the first five of the six categories on the scoring guide:

> topic statement, which makes a clear, general presentation of the student's main idea;
>
> evidence, which is accurate, factual information, relevant to the topic statement;
>
> explanations, which elaborate on the topic statement or show how, why, and to what extent evidence cited supports the topic statement;
>
> concluding statement, which provides a summary statement that draws together ideas and evidence; and
>
> organization, which demonstrates a logical, coherent flow of ideas.

A sixth category, response to task, provides a focused holistic score describing how well the student's essay demonstrates the "skill contributing to critical thinking" on which the essay question was based.

The detailed version of the scoring guide from which the teachers work is shown in Figure 2. The definitions which follow each of the six categories describe "standards" of acceptable performance for that category. An essay can receive one of four possible scores in each category:

> not present, indicating that the element or skill is missing from the essay;
>
> standard not met, indicating that the element or skill is present in the essay, but that it does not conform to the standard described in the guide;
>
> standard met, indicating that the element or skill is present in the essay and that it conforms to the standard described; or
>
> standard exceeded, indicating that the element or skill is present and that it surpasses the standard described.

Insert Figure 2 about here

As part of the project's inservice component, teachers receive training in the use of the scoring guide. Training materials include sets of sample essays scored by consensus of the steering committee, the rationale for giving those scores, and suggestions that the teacher might use in conferring with individual students to help them improve the quality of their essays. Teachers are given the opportunity to score a variety of essays, to discuss their reasons for giving the scores they select, and to come to consensus with us and among themselves about what the most appropriate score is for each sample essay. (In addition, as a part of staff development, teachers receive instruction in such techniques as questioning, discussion, and writing activities that directly support their teaching of critical thinking.)

Here are two sample essays written in response to the question that asks

11th grade students to evaluate the arguments made in Thomas Paine's Common Sense (from the sample test booklet presented earlier in this paper). Each essay is followed by excerpts from the training materials which provide the rationale for the scores given and suggestions for providing feedback to the students who wrote the essays.[2]

> Thomas Paine's arguments are not strong enough to convince me to support the fight for independence from Britain. His facts are too general, and he does not thoroughly support his arguments.
>
> What Paine states is common sense. However, a fight for independence is a drastic step, and Paine gives no evidence that such a measure would be successful.
>
> Paine makes statements such as "The American economy would be even stronger today if no European power had anything to do with it." This is only his opinion. Who's to know if he is correct or not?
>
> Paine states his argument in such a nonchalant manner that I am not convinced that a move for independence is best.

Topic Statement (3 = standard exceeded). The topic statement provides the main idea and the position of the student. It also indicates the reasons why the student has arrived at that decision, i.e., the explicit criteria the student is using to evaluate the argument.

The topic statement is fine.

Evidence (1 = standard not met). The student offers only one piece of evidence from the text.

The student could be asked to identify the various reasons that Paine gives for the fight for independence. Next to each reason, the student could make a judgment about whether or not the reason is acceptable or accurate. Once this has been done, the student might select those reasons or points of evidence that will be dealt with in the composition.

Explanations (1 = standard not met). There is little evidence of clear reasoning or explaining here. The use of "however" in the second paragraph attempts to show a relationship between the first sentence and the author's position, but it provides only the

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[2] The scoring rationale and suggestions for revision are based upon written comments prepared by Stephen M. Koziol, Jr., University of Pittsburgh.

surface evidence of a relationship rather than a clear statement of a position--i.e., that Paine's facts are too general and that he does not thoroughly support his arguments--and the student does not deal with either of these points in the composition. The student seems to be suggesting that people should fight for something only if they know they will be successful.

The student could be asked to identify which of Paine's facts are too general and not supported. Then the student could explain why those facts are too general or unsupported and offer alternative evidence, if possible. The student might draft that section of the composition before deciding whether additional attention to communicating explanations needs to be given. If the three or more reasons are identified but the explanations are still not present, the teacher could focus on having the student identify what the relationship is between the thesis assertion and the reason, and assist the student in selecting words or phrases to reflect that relationship.

Concluding Statement (2 = standard met). The word "nonchalant" reiterates the position taken in the thesis statement that Paine's arguments are too general and unsupported. However, the body of the composition has not dealt adequately with that thesis position. Therefore, while it is a restatement, it does not draw together the ideas and evidence in the body of the composition in a complete or thorough way.

It is likely that the problems with the conclusion will be alleviated by additional attention to the evidence and the reasoning. It would be helpful also if the student provided some elaboration for the word "nonchalant." The teacher might ask the student for synonyms for "nonchalant" and suggest that they be included after "nonchalant" in the essay to clarify further just what is intended. For example, "Paine states his argument in such a nonchalant, casual, unsupported manner that ...."

Organization (2 = standard met). There is an organization here and it is clear. Basically, each part of the composition is placed in a separate paragraph and sequenced reasonably.

The student could also explore how to organize his/her ideas in more fully developed paragraphs. How might paragraphs two and three be joined together, for example? What else might have to be done if this were all one paragraph? The focus here would be on helping the student recognize the need to include more relation and transition words and phrases when the ideas are compacted into a single paragraph. That compaction places greater emphasis on the development and support of the thesis idea.

Response to Task (1 = standard not met). The topic statement is the strongest indication that the student intends to respond comprehensively to the task. The body of the composition fails to meet the task demands either in the number of reasons dealt with or

in the adequacy of the treatment of ideas. The conclusion once again suggests that the student was aware of the task demands.

As discussed under Evidence and Explanations above, the major need here is for a better and more complete selection of evidence and reasons and a more clearly identified relationship between the reasons selected and the thesis statement.

> I will support the fight for independence because without our independence we will be a slave country.
>
> There are several reasons why we need our independence from Great Britain, one is that every time Great Britain goes to war our American trade goes to ruin because of our connection with Great Britain. Also there will be no more suffering for us for what Great Britain did. If we are free will will be able to make trade with other countries.
>
> I believe if we get our independence from Great Britain there will be better happiness in our country.

Topic Statement (1 = standard not met). There is a clear statement of the student's position as well as a hint about why the student has taken that position (evident in the word "slave"). However, the notion of "slave" here seems out of place.

If "slave" is the idea that the student wants to communicate, then the topic statement will need to be expanded to provide more information about how not getting independence equates with being enslaved. The student can be asked to explain what he/she means by a "slave country" and asked to reflect about whether those qualities are accurate for the British--Colonial relationship at the time. The major problem here may be diction (word choice); asking questions about the word "slave" could clarify the intent and lead to better definition.

Evidence (1 = standard not met). Although there seem to be three reasons identified, there are in reality only two. Without much more explanation, there is little difference between reasons one and three. The statement of the evidence is not clear. Just what is the student referring to in reason two, where he or she says, "there will be no more suffering for us. . ."? There are some possible connections to what Paine says, but these connections are not clear.

As with the first eleventh grade essay, above, the student needs a much better handle on what the evidence is. The teacher might proceed much as described in suggestions for revision of evidence in the first essay; or, after a conference, the teacher might ask for another draft composed as focused free writing that might give the student more to work with.

Explanations (1 = standard not met). There is little evidence of explanation here. There is some indication of sequential reasoning, but the use of the "also" type connector is inadequate to the task.

The student could be asked to answer an "if that were not true" or "if we had independence" statement after each of the "three" reasons given. The teacher might then suggest that inserting that kind of consideration statement after each reason would make the explanation clearer and far more complete.

Concluding Statement (2 = standard met). There is a sense of the last sentence as a conclusion. As with the topic statement, it indicates the author's position ("if we get our independence from Great Britain") as well as the student's position ("there will be better happiness in our country"). However, once again, the source for that position and the student's real intent in the statement are unclear. It is logical to conclude that better trade, less suffering, and more extensive security for trading would lead to more happiness, but that relationship is not made clear.

Clarification of the meaning and intent of "slave" in the thesis statement as well as elaboration and explanation of the evidence in the body of the composition should make the conclusion more specific to the essay. And, here again, the student might be asked to do another draft of the conclusion after the initial conference with the teacher.

Organization (1 = standard not met). The composition has an introduction, a body (second paragraph, which also contains a topic sentence specific to it), and a conclusion. The details in the second paragraph are not presented in good sequence. There is little reason for putting the topic statement and the conclusion into separate paragraphs.

At the very least, the student could be encouraged to resequence the details presented in the second paragraph and join everything into one paragraph. Further elaboration of evidence as described above would aid the organization as well.

Response to Task (1 = standard not met). The essay attempts an evaluation.

However, there needs to be a much clearer tie-in between the topic statement and the reasons given and much more explanation of how the evidence supports that topic statement. There needs to be a better and clearer tie-in between the conclusion and the rest of the composition. Once again, following the suggestions above under Evidence and Explanations might guide those changes.

As the essay tests are currently used by the district, they are in no

sense standardized tests. The test forms are not equivalent; different reading passages and essay questions make the difficulty of the tests variable, and hence not useful for comparative purposes. Although we try to maintain as much consistency as possible in the use of the scoring guide, the situation does not permit sufficient control to ensure its reliable use. A random sample of papers is double-scored by the steering committee after each test administration, and reliability, defined in terms of percent agreement between the two scorers, is not as high as we would like. For the most recent administration, percent of perfect agreement ranged from 47% to 50% across the six scoring categories, and percent agreement within one score point ranged from 91% to 95%. Another set of papers was scored by raters who were more thoroughly trained and not otherwise connected with the project. Here, percent of perfect agreement ranged from 57% to 68%, and percent agreement within one score point ranged from 96% to 98%. This suggests that more thorough training of raters who are not scoring their own students' essays will produce more reliable scores. Since the scoring guide is presently used primarily for diagnosis, for conferring with students, and for planning instruction, we are not overly concerned with reliability at this time. While the scoring guide could be used to monitor student achievement, it would have to be applied under more controlled conditions (on equivalent test forms, with centralized double or triple scoring of all papers).

Although we call our tests Critical Thinking Tests, we recognize that the label is somewhat arbitrary. As yet, the construct, critical thinking, is a hazy one, operating in a poorly defined nomological network. Not surprisingly, the semantic confusion caused by diverse theoretical definitions of critical thinking is reflected in the diverse operational definitions represented by different tests. This lack of commonality among "critical

thinking" tests is further compounded when one compares testing formats, which can be oral, written, non-verbal, multiple-choice, short-answer, or essay tests--all features which put different demands on the examinee. We developed this test because nothing available suited our beliefs about how critical thinking should be defined and measured and, at the same time, met the needs of the district for a diagnostic test that would complement critical thinking instruction without overburdening social studies teachers. A construct validation study is planned for the 1983-84 academic year, the results of which should be available by September 1984. We intend to explore the relationship between student performance on these tests rated by the Diagnostic Scoring Guide, and variables representing explainable rater bias, test form difficulty, student achievement in reading, language arts, and social studies (including prior knowledge relevant to the essay question), and student performance on other available measures of critical thinking. This information should increase our understanding and improve our interpretations of scores students receive on MAP Critical Thinking Tests.

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Name _____ Teacher _____

Date _____ School _____

Grade & Class _____

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MONITORING ACHIEVEMENT IN PITTSBURGH
(MAP)

Critical Thinking Test

Grade 11: Form 2

Field Test Version, 1983-1984 School Year

DIRECTIONS: Imagine you are a colonist reading the following article by Thomas Paine. Decide whether or not his arguments have convinced you to support the fight for independence from Britain. Then write a composition in which you explain your decision.

COMMON SENSE*

by Thomas Paine

I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense.

Volumes have been written about the struggle between England and America. People from all backgrounds have taken part in the discussions, but all attempts to reach a compromise have failed. The time to talk is past. War must now decide the question.

By becoming a matter of warfare instead of debate, the struggle introduces a new era of politics. People will now have to think in a new way. All the plans and proposals that were made before the battles of Lexington and Concord last year are useless now. As much has been said about the advantages of reaching a settlement with Great Britain, we should now look at the other side of the argument. We should recall the many injuries we have suffered and will continue to suffer because of our connection with Great Britain.

Figure 1. Sample Test

Many people say that, since America has prospered under British rule, we should not change that arrangement. Nothing could be more incorrect than that kind of thinking. The American economy would be even stronger today if no European power had anything to do with it. There will always be a market for American farm products as long as Europe needs to eat.

People also think that we need Great Britain to protect us. They believe that the British protect us because they like us. This is not true. The British protect us because they need us as a market. They protect us from their own enemies, France and Spain, not from ours.

Some say that Britain is our parent country. That is only partly true. Europe, not just England, is the parent country of America. The new world has been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from every part of Europe.

Whenever England goes to war, American trade goes to ruin, because of our connection with Britain. It makes good sense for America to separate itself from Britain. That we are an ocean away from them is a strong argument for our going our own way.

There is something absurd in supposing it right for a continent to be forever governed by a small island. It is in America's best political, economic, and social interests to be a separate and independent state. Anything short of independence is mere patchwork and cannot work in the long run.

*Text adapted from Thomas Paine, "Common Sense," pamphlet printed anonymously in Philadelphia, 1776, reprinted in London for J. Almon, 1776.

DIRECTIONS: Now imagine you are a colonist reading Thomas Paine's Common Sense. Decide whether or not his arguments have convinced you to support the fight for independence from Britain. Then write a composition in which you explain your decision. Your composition should include:

- a topic statement telling whether or not you would support the fight for independence;
- the main points Thomas Paine makes in the article;
- explanations of why these points would or would not convince you; and
- a concluding statement that sums up your position.

If you need more space, you may write on the back of this page.

MAP CRITICAL THINKING PROJECT

DIAGNOSTIC SCORING GUIDE
DETAILED VERSION

DEFINITIONS OF SCORING STANDARDS

Topic Statement	-makes clear, general presentation of main idea -may be one or more sentences -usually appears at beginning, but may be found in middle
Evidence	-presents information (facts or other citations) from reading passage or from student's general knowledge -is relevant to topic statement or main points -is accurate -is sufficient to support topic statement
Explanations	-are elaborations of key points in topic statement -show how, why, and to what extent evidence cited supports topic statement -use techniques such as parallel construction, definitions of terms, repetition, and explicit cue words such as "for instance," "however," "on the other hand," "because," etc.
Concluding Statement	-provides summary statement or generalization -draws together ideas and evidence -relates to topic statement -may paraphrase topic statement
Organization	-presents logical, meaningful flow of ideas -arranges sentences and paragraphs to follow from each other
Response to Task	-fulfills task objective by summarizing, classifying, inferring, or evaluating as requested in essay prompt

SCORE POINTS

0 = not present	The element or skill is missing from the essay. Revision should be recommended.
1 = standard not met	The element or skill is present in the essay, but it does not conform to the standard as defined. Revision should be recommended.
2 = standard met	The element or skill is present in the essay, and it conforms to the standard as defined. Revision may be recommended.
3 = standard exceeded	The element or skill is present in the essay, and it exceeds the standard as defined. No revision is needed..

Figure 2. Diagnostic Scoring Guide